assure them of the best sympathies of the absentees.

A list of more than 100 masters who had already granted the privilege of leaving work at 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon was then read over by the secretary, Mr. Carter, of course in the midst of great applause; and two or three letters, out of a number received from the masters themselves, were read, in order to show that in this meeting, to celebrate so peaceful and harmonious a movement, they had the best wishes and cordial approval of their employers. A brief retrospect of what had been done was also reported, and the resolution of the evening was then moved by Mr. Carter to the effect, that "This meeting, fully appreciating any measure that tends to promote a good understanding between employers and employed, do accord a vote of thanks to those who have so generously granted the 4 o'clock privilege." They had not assembled, he observed, to celebrate a triumph, but gratefully to testify their respect for, and to do all in their power to promote a good understanding with, their employers as a body, as well as to promote that principle of conciliation which was so important to the interests not only of those present, but of all the members of every trade throughout the country. Any reflecting man must see that the organization which had effected this improvement had grown out of the general spirit of progress throughout the whole of society, —that spirit which had already given rise to our athenæums, our mechanics' institutions, our baths and washhouses, our benefit and building societies, and our associations for other desirable purposes. He was glad to see that they moved with the spirit of the times,—that they had cast aside the old trades' weapons,—that the spirit which generated strikes and brought them enemies instead of friends, and misery instead of advantage, was now passing away like the spirit of war, while a better spirit was coming over them. They now saw that strikes were a great evil, and that besides the moral evil and the pecuniary loss arising from them, they were a source of constant antagonism and hostility between those whose interest it was to work to one another's hands, instead of in a way which was most prejudicial to both. After eulogizing those few influential masters who had first granted the privilege, and had thus materially promoted its further progress, the resolution moved was seconded by Mr. Cassidy, and carried by uproarious acclamation.

Mr. Gray, master-builder, acknowledged the vote of thanks for himself and for others, who had authorized him to do so. The feelings of the employers towards the employed, he assured them, were tempered to a great extent with kindness. They were sensible their interests ought to be identified. They wished by all means to promote what the operatives had here met to celebrate. Their earnest desire was to see their common interests identified in future.

Mr. Gray was followed by Mr. Jarvis, foreman to Messrs. Baker, who also assured them of the kindly feelings of the masters towards the men, when applied to in a proper manner, such as had led to the present successful issue.

'Prosperity to the Trade' was then proposed by the Chairman, and was responded to by Mr. Bamber, who said they were now entering on the beginning of a new era in the history of trades, not only of the metropolis, but of all England, and even of the world at large. The peculiarity of this movement was that it claimed for itself a distinctive force and a new character, as greatly opposed to previous modes of procedure as the free-trade movement was to the old system of monopoly. They were as yet but at the beginning of the beginning of a system, which was capable of yielding them all they required for the complete moral, political, and intellectual regeneration of the trades. One prominent feature of this new system was the absence of every thing like compulsion, threat, or revengeful feeling, recourse to strikes, or any thing having the remotest connection with physical force. The importance and the capabilities of this new principle, indeed, in its influence on the future destinies of the trades were not yet appreciated as they would be. It was yet but in embryo. But it would be a powerful instrument in the production of results sought for in vain by other means, by which they never could be accomplished. If they looked to the movements in progress for the improvement of the public health, and the recent speeches of Lord Morpeth and others in high and influential station, at Sheffield and elsewhere, they would be more and more convinced that they were entering on a new era, capable of realizing the most Utopian ideas ever dreamt of by thinking visionaries.

The secretary trusted that this meeting would be a sufficient assurance to those masters who might have otherwise continued in doubt as to the spirit which is now beginning to actuate the working classes. He hoped the masters would give their workmen the frequent opportunity to prove themselves faithful, by trusting in their good intentions; and that having thus proved faithful, they should be more and more trusted. He could not help instancing with gratitude the exertions made by some masters for the good of their men, and in particular by Mr. Thomas Cubitt, who had subscribed 100*l.* to found a library for his workmen, and 20*l.* a year for its increase, and who had established the most perfect arrangements for the comforts of those whose best interests, he clearly perceived, were inseparably identified with his own.

After "the Press" had been proposed, as the advocate of justice to all classes, a vote of thanks to the leaders of the present peaceful agitation was proposed by Mr. Richardson, who reprobated strikes, in which immense sums had been swallowed up without any of those real advantages which they might have otherwise yielded. One strike of cotton-spinners had cost 600,000*l.* and after all, brought only defeat. A sum of 2,000,000*l.* had been thrown away upon half-a-dozen strikes a few years since, nearly all of which were unsuccessful, even in the attainment of their more immediate object.

The meeting was finally addressed by Mr. Palmer; another master builder, who expressed a hope that this was indeed only the beginning of a new movement for the mental and moral as well as physical improvement of the industrious classes. The scrupulous care of public property by these classes, when thrown open to them, had been alluded to by a previous speaker. He hoped that they would exert themselves to secure the opening of the British Museum, the National Gallery, and other national institutions, on the only real holiday they had,—namely, Sunday. Despite of counter assertions, he was convinced that a beneficial moral influence would thus be produced.

THE PREBENDAL HOUSE, THAME, OXFORDSHIRE.

"This ancient ecclesiastical building is situate at a short distance north-west of the church, and, from the style of the earliest part of the architecture, it appears to have been erected about the same period in which the prebend was founded by Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, in 1241, who endowed it with the impropriation and advowson of the church of Thame."

At the dissolution of monastic establishments this fell, with others, into decay, and ultimately was appropriated to agricultural purposes. About Edward the Sixth's time the estate passed into the hands of the Williams' family, and thence to the Wenmans', in whose descendant it was vested in 1835 or 1836, when a portion of the property was divided into lots, and offered for sale.

At this time (1836) Mr. Charles Stone, a native of the town, having realized by honest industry a competence, returned, after an absence of some years, to the "seat of his youth," and was struck with the idea of making it a residence. It was then used as barns, stables, and other farming purposes, and was surrounded with hovels and sheds.

The original character of the place may be seen by referring to "Skelton's Oxfordshire," in a vignette at the head of Thame Hundred.

His friends ridiculed the idea of such an "auld houlet haunted biggin'," but the architect whom he consulted having told him, in the words of Brown, that there was a "capability," he purchased the premises, with about fifteen acres, in spite of jeers and owls and "ghaists that haunt auld ha' or chamer," and in 1837 proceeded to convert it into a residence, with the assistance of Mr. H. B. Hodson, architect.

The buildings consisted of what was once a chapel, with a beautiful triple lancet-headed window of the early English style, and two ranges of dwelling apartments, in one of which was a large hall or refectory, with a handsome window at the end, and probably

"Jolly friars tippled here
Ere the abbey walls had tumbled."

This part, too large for use, was taken down, so as to isolate the chapel; the remainder of that range, which has a handsome old porch, was converted, by dint of some ingenuity, into a convenient dwelling-house, and the other range into stabling and domestic out-offices, leaving the end of the refectory, with its "ivy mantled" window, as a picturesque ruin. Care was taken to preserve as much of the old work as possible, and to assimilate the new with it.

Mr. Charles Stone, unfortunately, did not live long to enjoy it; and on his death, about three years ago, it was sold to a gentleman of the same name, who now resides in it.

The property is bounded on one side by the Thame, a small stream which separates Oxfordshire from Buckinghamshire, and gives its water and its name to the more celebrated river, into which it flows near Dorchester.

The antiquarian and archæological tourist may find an interest in visiting this place, and also the church of Thame, which is a handsome old massive cruciform structure, and contains several fine and curious monuments, particularly those of the Williams and Quatremaine families. This church has lately been fitted up with new pews and seats, and otherwise repaired and decorated, much to the credit of the vicar and the parishioners.

RESTORATION OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Sir,—Perceiving by your columns that *important alterations* are now in progress at Westminster Abbey, I venture to offer a few remarks on that building.

It has often been a matter of surprise to me, that while nearly all our fine old cathedrals have undergone, or are undergoing, a process of restoration, Westminster Abbey should still remain in such a deplorable state. However, I trust that under the auspices of the present eminent dean, we may hope for better things, and more particularly as such extensive improvements are in contemplation in the neighbourhood of the Abbey.

In a few years there will be the new street and the monument to Caxton in close proximity to the cathedral, and if Mr. Barry's grand scheme is carried into execution, we shall have a new bridge in place of the present incurable structure; one side of Bridge-street will be demolished to make way for the new Parliament Houses, as also the Law Courts (which are proposed to be re-erected in the neighbourhood of the inns of court), so that the restoration of Westminster Abbey is, as it were, imperatively demanded, in order to keep pace with the times.

Every one will doubtless admit that "what is worth doing at all is worth doing well," and every one who has seen the abbey must surely also admit that its restoration is required. What has been done of late years, I consider as worse than useless, and in order to do the thing properly it must be commenced afresh, and that, I contend, on a grand scale. And firstly, as to the monuments, the chief of them are, as you have often said, very inappropriately placed to the great detriment of the architectural appearance of the abbey, and should be remedied by the erection of a suitable building in the neighbourhood of or adjoining the abbey, for the reception of the greater portion of the monuments.

The stone columns, which are in a wretched crumbling state, should be replaced, and at the same time the iron bars at the springings of the arches might be removed. I would remodel the two existing towers, and complete the third, which was commenced by Sir Christopher; and the *whole pile of building* should undergo a process of restoration in the most substantial manner.

The objection to what is here proposed, would naturally be want of funds. To this I would reply,—if the matter is taken up vigorously and energetically, with the intention of fully carrying it out, there is not the slightest doubt but that the requisite funds

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